Pam-India Merriam Edmund F. 1078

STUDIES IN FOREIGN MISSIONS

FOR USE IN

YOUNG PEOPLES SOCIETIES

No. 2.

THE MISSION TO THE BURMANS.

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The Mission to the Burmans.

By Rev. Edmund F. Merriam.

THE COUNTRY.

[References: The best encyclopædias will be found helpful; also, Fytche's Burma. Life of Judson, by his son. The Story of Baptist Missions, Hervey. Wyeth's Missionary Memorials. Buddhism, by Rhys David. Missionary Sketches, by S. F. Smith, D. D., and A Century of Baptist Foreign Missions, by Mrs. Titterington.]

Ques. 1. Give a short account of Burma.

Ans. At the time when Adoniram Judson began the Baptist Mission in Burma in 1813, the whole country was under the rule of the native kings; but a portion of it, including the Tenasserim Province, was conquered by the British in 1824, and again in 1852 the Pegu Province was added to British territory; but the rest, which is called Upper Burma, remained under the native king until 1885, when the capital, Mandalay, was captured, and the king was exiled to Madras. The native kings were always opposed to missions, but the whole country is now open to the labor of Christian missionaries.

2. Is Burma a rich or a poor country?

Ans. Burma has a fertile soil, and the products are bountiful and various. The whole country is prosperous, and the wages of laborers are about three times as high as in India. Women are more independent of their husbands than in any other Asiatic country, and they even engage in trade and accumulate property for themselves. The population of Burma is estimated at about eight millions.

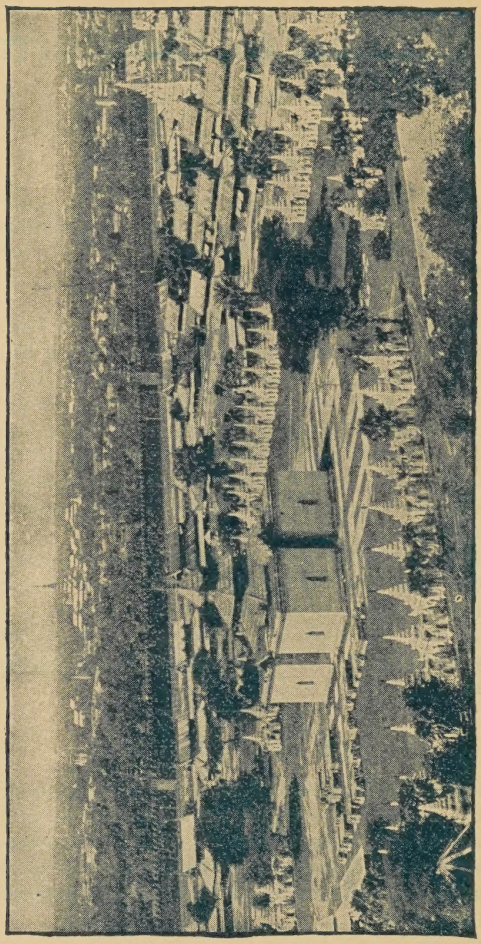
THE BURMAN RACE.

3. What specially distinguishes Burma among the nations of the world?

Ans. There is a greater variety of races within the limits of Burma than in any other territory of the same size in the world. It is estimated that there are about forty-seven different tribes scattered over the country. A few of these are found in separate localities, but the most of the peoples are mingled in all parts of the country.

4. Describe the Burman race.

(*Reference*, "The Races of Burma," published by the American Baptist Missionary Union.)



MANDALAY.

Ans. The Burman race is the principal race of the country, numbering probably one half of the population. They occupy especially the cities, towns, valleys, and plains. The other races formerly occupied the hills, but, under the present peaceful and prosperous condition of the country, they are mingling more and more with the Burman people. The Burmans are of a Mongolian type, but seem to have a mixture of the races of India. The Burman language is the official language of the country, and the government is using its authority to extend it among all the people.

BEGINNING OF WORK FOR BURMANS.

5. Who were the first American Baptist missionaries?

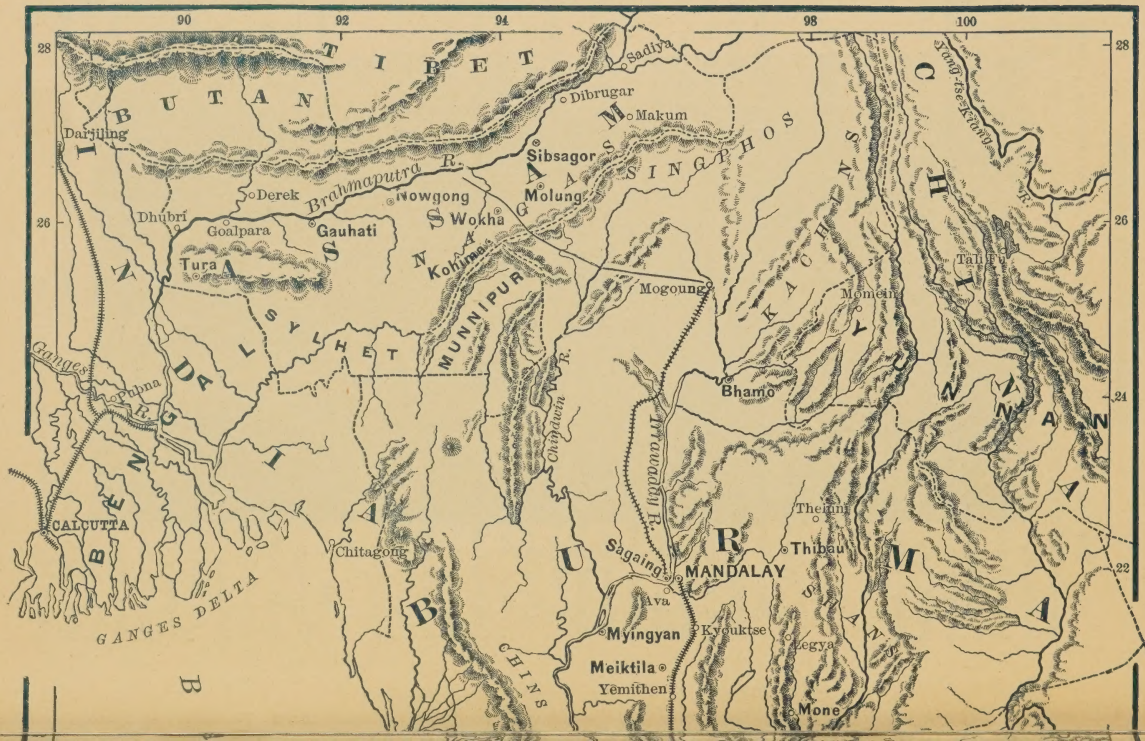
Ans. Rev. Luther Rice sailed from Philadelphia as a missionary of the American Board on Feb. 18, 1812, and on the 19th Rev. Adoniram Judson and his wife sailed from Salem, Massachusetts, as missionaries of the same society. They were all Congregationalists, but, anticipating the new conditions under which they would be called upon to carry on their Christian work, they applied themselves to the study of the New Testament during the voyage, with the result that all three became Baptists after arriving in India, and were baptized by the English Baptist missionaries in Calcutta.

6. How was the first American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society formed? (*Reference*, "History of American Baptist Missions," by Gammell.)

Ans. This action of the Judsons and Mr. Rice separated them from the Congregationalist Society, and Mr. Rice returned to America to induce the Baptists of this country to support them in their missionary work in India. This resulted in the formation of the American Baptist Missionary Union on May 18, 1814, in the city of Philadelphia. Meanwhile, Mr. Judson and his wife were seeking for an opening for missionary labor.

7. How was the mission to the Burmans begun?

Ans. The British East India Company expelled the Judsons from Bengal. They went to the Isle of France, and then returned to Madras, intending to go to the Straits of Penang to open a mission; but, while there, hearing that they were to be sent back to England, they hastily embarked in a schooner sailing for Rangoon, Burma, and, after a rough and perilous voyage, landed in that city July 13, 1813. So the Baptist mission in Burma was begun by the manifest leading of the providence of God. Mr. and Mrs. Judson naturally directed their labors first to the ruling race of the country. In fact, at that time other races were oppressed by the Burmans and were not generally found in the towns and cities. After a time the Judsons removed to Moulmein, continuing their labors among the Burmans. Others joined them, and the work for this people has continued to the present time.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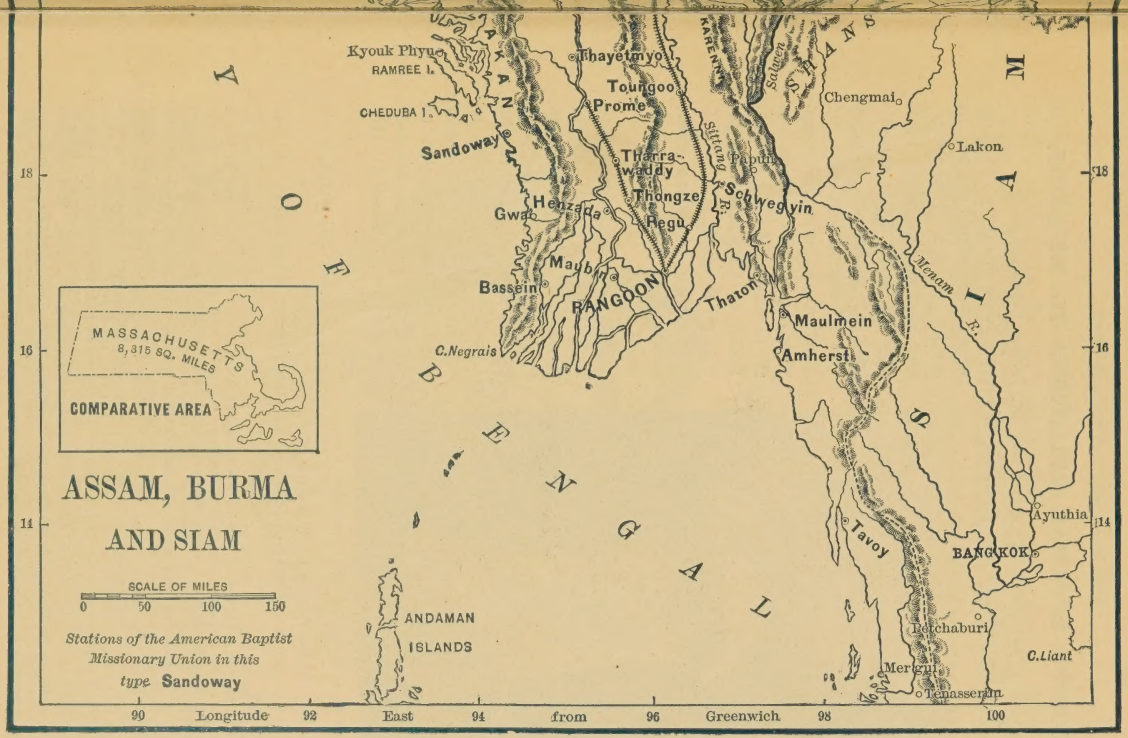

ASSAM, BURMA AND SIAM

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Stations of the American Baptist Missionary Union in this type **Sandoway**

JUDSON'S EPOCHAL RELATIONS TO MISSIONS.

8. In what great missionary event was Mr. Judson first engaged?

Ans. The beginning of Mr. Judson's missionary labor was the pivot upon which many events turned. In the first place, he, with others, formed that remarkable band of young men* whose earnestness and enthusiasm aroused the Congregationalists of America to an interest in foreign missions, which culminated in the formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

HAYSTACK MONUMENT, WILLIAMSTOWN, MASS.

9. What important event sprang from Judson's conversion?

Ans. By his conversion to Baptist faith, and appeal through Mr. Rice to the Baptists of America for support, he was used of God to the arousing of the Baptists to organize foreign missionary work and the formation of the American Baptist Missionary Union (Gammell's "History").

10. What important influence did Mr. Judson have on missions in India?

Ans. Although he sought to join the English Baptist missionaries in their

*Samuel J. Mills, born at Torrington, Ct., April 21, 1783, heard much of missions in his infancy. His mother delighted to talk of Eliot and Brainerd and of other missionaries to the heathen. Once she remarked concerning Samuel, "I have consecrated this child to the service of God as a missionary." The words made a lasting impression upon his mind. He went to Williams College in 1806. Here he made efforts to promote piety among his fellow-students. In the summer of 1807, he invited Gordon Hall and James Richards to a walk. He led them to an unfrequented place in a meadow, where, by the side of a stack of hay, they spent the day in fasting and prayer, and in conversing on the duty of missions to the heathen. Mills found the minds of his companions prepared. They continued their meetings and in 1808 a society was formed for study of missions. The subject was so strange that the existence of the society was kept a profound secret by its members. They visited prominent clergymen, spending their vacations and laboring to interest them in the subject of missions. They also labored to excite a missionary spirit among the students of other colleges. In 1809 Mills went to Andover Theological Seminary. As a result of his labors there, Hall, Judson, Newell, and Nott united with him in an agreement to establish a mission among the heathen in some foreign land. (Abridged from History of American Missions.)

labors in Serampore, there was not room for more laborers in that little Danish territory in the heart of the British possessions in India, and so Judson was forced to seek new and fresh fields for missionary effort. He started out, and, led by God, he landed in Burma; so he was thus the pioneer in the enlargement of missions in India. Others followed his footsteps, and in the course of time occupied various parts of India with Christian missions.

11. What impulse did he give to missions everywhere?

Ans. Judson, by the hand of God, established the Baptist missions in Burma, which, including all branches — the Burman, the Karen, the Shan, and

MR. AND MRS. JUDSON.

other missions — are regarded as one of the most interesting fields of missionary labor of modern times. The Karen Mission is universally quoted as one of the miracles of modern missions.

12. What has been his influence on other missionaries?

Ans. Judson, as a missionary pioneer, encountered even greater dangers and endured greater sacrifices than William Carey and his companions in opening the missions in Serampore. So Judson is generally regarded as a type of the noble, devoted, self-sacrificing missionary hero and pioneer. As such,

his example and life have been an inspiration to thousands of others, inciting them to similar devotion in the service of Christ.

13. What is Dr. Judson's rank as a translator of the Bible?

Ans. As a translator, Judson introduced an epoch into the work of translating the Bible into heathen tongues. Carey and his companions had translated the Bible, or portions of it, into about thirty different tongues and dialects, but the translations were hastily made and inaccurate. Judson's work was exact, and stands to-day as a model missionary translation. It is still, with comparatively few corrections, the authorized version of the Scriptures for the Burmans.

ANN HASSELTINE JUDSON.

14. Tell us about Dr. Judson's first wife.

Ans. Ann Hasseltine was born at Bradford, Mass., Dec. 22, 1789. She was a pretty, bright, gay young girl, and about the last one that any one would select as a candidate for the sacrifices and devotion of a missionary life; but her history proved that under an appearance of gaiety, and even frivolity, a deep and earnest spirit of consecration may exist. She graduated at Bradford Academy, still one of the foremost schools for girls in this country, and was married to Mr. Judson on Feb. 5, 1812. From this time her history is identified with his. On her visit to America in 1821 and 1822, her words and presence aroused great interest. ("Ann H. Judson," by Prof. Knowles.)

15. Is Ann Hasseltine Judson worthy of being remembered for her own sake?

Ans. Aside from her association with Dr. Judson, Mrs. Judson is worthy of independent and perpetual memory for the great ability and devotion which she showed during the captivity of Dr. Judson and his companions in the death prison of Ava, and during the long-continued and horrible captivity at Oung-Pen-La (now spelled Aungbinlè). The Burmans furnish no food to their prisoners, and during his long captivity of more than eighteen months, Dr. Judson was entirely dependent upon the efforts of his heroic wife for food, medicine, and every alleviation of the discomforts of his imprisonment. She bought and begged food for him, and continually interceded with the authorities for his release, which at last she effected. It was entirely owing to her efforts that the life of the great missionary to the Burmans was preserved for his subsequent and most valuable labors. Her labors during this time destroyed her own health, and she died at Amherst, Oct. 24, 1826, only thirty-seven years old. Her name lives imperishably among the list of the great missionary heroes of the Christian church.

BUDDHISM IN BURMA.

16. What is the religion of the Burmans?

Ans. Next to Siam, Burma is the most Buddhistic country in the world. Almost every eminence throughout the country is crowned with a pagoda, and Buddhist shrines and monasteries meet the eye in all the towns and cities which one visits. The Buddhist priests are the school-teachers of the country, and have the training of the boys and young men. Buddhists do not consider girls worth educating. The native kings of Burma were considered the political heads and protectors of the Buddhist religion throughout the world, and the overthrow of the last king of Burma in December, 1885, was one of the greatest blows which the Buddhist religion ever received. It is now without an official head, and is becoming more and more divided into rival sects. It can no longer be considered a missionary or an aggressive religion.

17. What is Buddhism?

Ans. Buddhism is practically Atheism. It believes in no living God, but worships the image of a man who his adherents acknowledge died more than two thousand years ago. It has some excellent precepts, but, owing to its lack of the divine and supernatural character, it has no hold upon the lives of its followers. The practices of the Buddhist religion have come to amount to about this: that those things which one does not care to do are wicked and should be avoided, but those things which the evil human heart most longs for are allowable. So that a devout Buddhist is exceedingly careful not to kill an animal or even tread upon a worm, but has no scruple against taking human life if occasion seems to call for it. The Buddhists are among the most bigoted of heathen peoples, and have proved to be the most difficult to reach with the truth of the Gospel of Christ. ("Buddhism," by Rhys David. Many other good books on this subject can be found in libraries.)

POLITICAL POSITION.

18. What is Burma's relation to other countries?

Ans. A glance at the map of Asia will show that the political position of Burma is one of great importance. It forms the northwestern portion of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, and, standing on the borders between China and India, it holds relations with both of these two greatest nations of Asia. Burma has, therefore, been the battle ground of all ages. After its establishment in India, Burma was the first conquest of the British forces to the eastward, and it has played an important part in recent political events in southeastern Asia. The attempts of the French to seize upon Siam were frustrated by British influence, since the English authorities had no desire to see the whole eastern frontier of Burma occupied by an important European power. They preferred as their

neighbor the native king of Siam. Burma reaches up far north between Assam and China, and almost to Tibet. The future land communication between China and India will probably pass through Burman territory.

19. What two great races meet in Burma?

Ans. On the frontier of Burma now are met the two great races which will control the future of Asia — the Anglo Saxon, through its possessions in British India, and the Chinese race, with the most populous empire which the world has ever seen, and with those characteristics which, in the opinion of well-informed judges, will make the Chinese one of the future ruling races of the world. Burma, occupying this midway position, will always be a country of much importance, although the Burmans, as a race, will probably have less and less influence as the years go by. Even now the Chinese and the natives of India are coming in and taking the industries of the country from the hands of the more indolent Burmans.

CHARACTERISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS.

20. Name some of the most important and prominent features of the Burman Mission.

Ans. The greatest characteristic of the mission to the Burmans is the product of Judson's Bible, which has been referred to above as a model for the translation of the Bible into heathen tongues. The mission to the Burmans may also be cited as an inspiration to missions in many other heathen lands. When Judson went to Burma, the territory was under the control of a savage and cruel heathen despot. Unlike the missionaries to Calcutta, he had not the advantage of a civilized government, which, even though unfriendly in its attitude, would be sure to regard the lives of the missionaries. Mr. and Mrs. Judson took their lives in their hands, and set an example which has been followed by hundreds of devoted Christian missionaries in other parts of Asia, in Africa, and in the Islands of the Sea, in exposing their lives freely to the perils of residence among savage and degraded peoples for the sake of the Gospel of Christ. As a mission to Buddhists, the Burman mission has also been an example to those who have labored among the people of this same religious faith in other countries. But the greatest achievements of the Burman Mission are not in what it has done for the Burmans, so much as its influence in introducing the Gospel to the Karens and other races of Burma, and to the peoples of the surrounding countries. These will be treated of more fully under separate studies.